

The Cheerful Letter

Every place a church; every day the Lord's day; all events blessings; all joy thanksgiving; and all nature and life full of Good.—James Freeman Clarke.

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SHUT THE DOOR AGAINST FOUR THINGS

BY SAMUEL MACAULAY LINDSAY, D.D.

At one of our universities the athletic coach sent a New Year card to each member of the squad, with this sentence on it: "Shut the door." He believes no one can excel in athletics until he learns to do this.

It is a habit of life every student has to develop. No one can make progress in his studies until he learns to shut the door on the attractions that would woo him from books and lectures.

This is also true in business. The men who succeed must concentrate on their work and shut the door against the temptation to engage in less worthful activities.

If we would develop a Christian character we must open the door of our hearts to Christ and close it to everything that would separate us from him. We have learned from experience that growth in Christian grace is impossible until we learn to shut the door.

Jesus urged his disciples to cultivate this worshipful habit of prayer. He believed that his followers should find an island of silence in each day's program where they could relax and communicate with the Infinite. In the Sermon on the Mount he said to his disciples: "When thou prayest, enter into thy closet and when thou hast shut the door, pray to thy Father."

Prayer should do for our souls what sleep and food do for our bodies. It should enrich the soul and strengthen the will. Why is it that some experience renewal through prayer, and others find it to be an exhausting exercise? It is because some have learned the art of

prayer, and others have not. If prayer is to be an exercise of spiritual renewal we must learn to shut the door when we pray.

1. *We Must Shut the Door on Ill Will.*

Our relationship to others affects prayer. The reason many receive no answer to prayer and experience no spiritual uplift is because they cherish in their hearts ill will toward some other person. To such the Saviour says: "First be reconciled to thy brother."

Someone asks: "Have I not the right to have ill will in my heart toward my enemy?" Jesus answered this question when he said: "Love your enemies. Bless them that curse you. Do good to them that hate you and pray for them who despitefully use you and persecute you." We cannot be Christians and hate anyone.

Good will spires us to look for the best in others, to expect the best from others and to give our best to others. Such an attitude may seem foolish in the presence of reality, but it is always justified by experience. Those who practice good will are blessed with friendship, happiness and peace. Those who practice ill will are cursed by hatred, sorrow and strife.

Good will is the love of God throbbing in a person's heart. If we keep ourselves in the love of God we shall have the right spirit toward all who understand us and all who misunderstand us, toward those who love us and those who hate us. Ill will freezes the heart in which it abides.

2. *We Must Shut the Door on Pride.*

Some men enter into the presence of God conscious of their intellectual superiority, and thank God that they are not as other men are. Others rejoice in their financial generosity and thank God

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they are not as other men are. Again, others are puffed up with racial pride and thank God they are not as other men are. Such pride withers the soul and prevents us from realizing the presence of God.

The Pharisee is always with us. We have all heard him pray for our humiliation. He is generally a righteous man with a reputation for unselfishness, but he uses his own righteousness as a club on those who are less righteous and his own generosity as a sword to slay all who are less generous. His weakness is not in his righteousness nor in his unselfishness, but in the despicable attitude that he takes toward his less fortunate brothers.

The publican is closer to the heart of both God and man than the Pharisee. He does not make any claim to saintliness. He does not compare himself with others, but with commendable humility says: "God be merciful to me a sinner." Humility is a choice virtue. One conscious of the presence of the Almighty will be humble in prayer and be delivered from parading his own achievements.

3. *When We Pray We Must Shut the Door on Selfishness.*

When prayer becomes a daily recitation of our personal needs without reference to the needs of others, we fail to get the spiritual blessings that we should receive through prayer.

When praying for comfort in bereavement let us remember others who have been bereaved. When praying for health let us remember others who are sick. When praying for bread let us remember others who are hungry. When praying for our own nation let us remember other nations. When praying for success let us

remember others in adversity.

Happy indeed is the man who can always say: "There is nothing I wish for myself that I do not wish for others."

4. *When We Pray We Must Shut the Door on Ostentation.*

Our Lord urged his disciples to be simple and sincere in their prayers and held up as a warning those who were ostentatious in their devotions. When some men pray they forget the greatness of the Most High and his nearness to all. Because of this, they become pompous and vain. Such people should read the story of Moses and the burning bush, and meditate on the words of God: "Take off thy shoes from off thy feet, the ground on which thou standest is holy ground."

In our hymn books we have some prayers that are very helpful because of their simplicity. It is a healthful spiritual exercise to study them. One of these is the prayer of Cardinal Newman. In the hour when he most keenly felt his dependence on God for spiritual guidance, he wrote, "Lead, kindly light." The reading of his prayer reveals to us the simplicity of the author, and is a rebuke to all who are ostentatious in their prayers.

One of our missionaries tells us that the earliest converts in Africa were very earnest and regular in their devotions, but there were no private places for retirement in their huts, so they went out into the forests and selected a spot where they would go for communication with God. In going frequently to and from these places of devotion their feet made a path. When one would become indifferent and infrequent in his devotions, his path would announce the fact by the grass that grew on it. When this grew observable to the others, they would say to him, "Brother, the grass grows yonder in thy path."

Happy, indeed, is the person who takes time to pray each day and who learns the art of prayer in the school of Christ.

—*Boston Transcript.*

"Without religion the greatest man is a failure, with it the smallest is a triumph."

ANGEL OF TENEMENTS

To the young, handsome Ohio-born Jewish girl in Rochester, New York, it was a call that could not be denied—the call of the sick, poor, and helpless. So she left the home of her parents, and came to New York with dark and shining eyes.

High hopes were in her heart. She knew what was ahead of her: years of training, and hard, hard work for little or no reward. But she did not care.

Following her graduation from the New York Hospital Training School for Nurses, Lillian D. Wald set out to do good works among the very poor in the dismal slums of New York's lower East Side. She had a friend, Mary Brewster, who was as fair as Miss Wald was dark. They were known as the angels of the tenements.

Quickly Miss Wald discovered that they were only two against the gods of misery and sickness and despair. An idea came to her. She would establish a Visiting Nurse Service. She spoke to those who might help; among them Jacob H. Schiff, who, hearkening to her vivid pleas, gave them a building at 265 Henry Street, New York.

Thus was the Henry Street Settlement born. It has been in existence since.

Miss Wald was at its helm for forty years. In 1933, when she was sixty-six, she resigned as its head. But the works that she did live after her. Last week, students at Abraham Lincoln High School, in Brooklyn, whose decision carries with it a medal, voted her "the outstanding citizen of the city."

She often has been called the Jane Addams of New York. While actively in service as Head Resident at the Settlement, she built up tremendous good-will for the organization.

As the fame of the work it was doing grew, she did not have to plead for money. All she had to do was to talk to bankers, and those supposedly hard-shelled gentlemen would loosen up.

She brought to the poor not only healing, but light, as well, and she fought for

them, and for decent living and working conditions for them.

"To the public," Helena Huntingdon Smith once wrote of her in *The New Yorker*, "Miss Wald has long ranked as one of the national heroines along with Jane Addams, Carrie Chapman Catt, and a few others.

"If one were a superpatriot, one would be quite solemnly justified in regarding her as a menace. She has been a pacifist, an internationalist, and an open partizan in labor disputes.

"She has never actively joined a Socialist Party, but she makes no secret of her radical sympathies, and she speaks kindly, if candidly, of the works of the Soviet Government. Yet, in the long run, the best people have continued to sing her praises, and give her their financial support.

"For one thing, they respect what she has done. You can't quarrel with nursing the poor. Socially, she is much in demand among the possessors of great wealth, and she is seen often at their houses, friendly, magnetic, disarming. . .

"What one remembers after talking with her is not the way she looks, it is the impact of a personality. . . . Someone once remarked that the Henry Street enterprise is more a personality than an organization—altho its organization is the last word.

"It is the personality which attracts such an astonishing range of people. Theodore Roosevelt, Kropotkin and Hughes, Ramsay MacDonald and Al Smith, and scores of others have visited her in Henry Street.

"They respect her knowledge, which is far-flung, earthy, compact of human realities. Few people have thrust such roots into the soil of New York."

—From the *Literary Digest*.

Dear Lord, make me beautiful
In the inner self,
And that whatever outward
Things I have
May be in harmony with
Those within.

—Contributed.

CORRESPONDENTS AND APPEALS

Letters should be addressed to Mrs. Laura M. Hurst, 78 Penfield Street, Roslindale, Mass.

Persons writing to the Department for the first time should ask for an enrollment blank and give as reference the name and address of their minister.

When a correspondent moves to a new address, notice should be sent to Headquarters, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass., and to those persons who have been sending letters and reading matter.

It is necessary to state positively that the Cheerful Letter Exchange is not a "clothing bureau" and not a "charitable" society in the usual sense of the word.

It is contrary to the rules of the Cheerful Letter Exchange to allow any one to make use of its magazine by addressing letters asking for money, clothing, or other articles, to those whose names are printed in the paper. This prohibition includes requests to borrow money and the offering of articles for sale. The name of any person who disobeys this rule will be dropped from the list, and any one who receives a request of this description is desired by the Central Committee to return no answer, but to enclose the letter at once to the Chairman of this Department.

Many people do care for just the kind of friendly service for which we are organized. We limit our efforts to them and their wishes.

CHEERFUL LETTER WORKERS

Vacation days are over and before long regular Alliance work will be resumed. This Department urges a *Cheerful Letter* magazine subscription in each branch. The chairman needs it to carry on the work satisfactorily. In adopting a *regular correspondent* please get in touch with your local chairman, who in turn will write this Department. The majority of work is carried on with the *Cheerful Letter* chairman in the local branch, not individuals. Before adopting any *regular correspondent* please write to this Department for approval. If this policy is followed it will help maintain the proper records. We ask you to cooperate in this matter.

CORRESPONDENTS

These *regular correspondents* may be adopted after postcard consultation with Mrs. Laura M. Hurst, 78 Penfield Street, Roslindale, Mass. This should be done in order to avoid duplication in arranging for *regular correspondents* and it might be well to make a second choice.

1. I have been a member of the *Cheerful Letter* Exchange for about 34 years and had such a good correspondence for several years. We exchanged such nice, interesting letters, but I guess she is dead, for I haven't had any answer to my letters. Now I am getting old and my husband is dead, have no children and live alone. I would appreciate a correspondent that would be a help to me. She need not write so often from a sense of duty—but just write when she had

something to say. I was 70 years old the 10th of August, so I do not expect to be here many more years. The *Cheerful Letter* friends have indeed been friends to me and I thank them for their kindness. Mrs. N. L. Gillis, Stovall, N. C.

2. Mrs. Ruby J. Ashley, Bina, N. C., writes for a regular correspondent. She and her husband are the parents of a little baby girl, age 20 months. Mrs. Ashley is 22 years old.

3. Mrs. Annie Williams, age 28, is a young widow and the mother of a five-year-old girl. She is lonely and wishes a regular correspondence. R. 2, Mt. Gilead, N. C.

4. I am a married lady (28), there being seven in my family: my husband, five children, four boys and one girl and myself. We live on a small mountain farm 12 miles from town and both my

husband and I belong to the Missionary Baptist Church. We have been in this county for two years and so far the drought has gotten our crops. Everything looks dark and gloomy at times, but I am sure that all will be well in the future. My husband and I are great hands for reading good wholesome literature. I have 400 glass canning jars that I want to fill with berries and vegetables if the season is favorable. The early frost destroyed our peaches, apples, plums and pears. Mrs. Garner Autrey, Crabtree, Ark.

5. Mrs. Bertie Vaughn, R. 1, Decatur, Tenn., has just lost her mother and father and is very sad and lonely. She is 34 years old and has five children, three boys and two girls, the oldest 13 years. She asks for a regular correspondent and is also anxious to receive good reading and books for the children.

6. Myself and family are back in North Carolina with my husband's parents. His health has been so poor he could no longer do his work, so we had to go home. I am 26 years old and have two girls, ages four and seven. I hope someone will write me regularly. Mrs. Grace Blevins, Brandon, N. C.

7. Mrs. Maude Emerson is 57 years old and the mother of seven grown children. She lives in a very rough, mountainous territory and the exchange of friendly letters would be appreciated. Rupert, Ark.

8. Mrs. Mattie Hobbs, Hattievile, Ark., has three children, two boys, ages four and eight, and one girl, age two. Her community is a small one and she thinks a regular correspondent would bring a little sunshine into her life.

9. I have been in this town just a short time and so far have not become acquainted with any of the people. My family have all left me and it is hard to get to see them. I feel so strange in this neighborhood that I thought a friendly letter now and then would be so pleasant. Mrs. Frances J. Setliffe, R. 2, Henry, Va.

10. I am married and have one little boy, age two. We live in a desolate place and it sure is lonesome. I enjoy reading

and a regular correspondent would be just right in helping to pass the long hours away. Mrs. Julia Johnson, Volney, Va.

11. As this is my first time to ever write I thought I would see if there was room enough in the sunshine corner for a lonely married woman, age 25, who desires a little cheer of some kind. I have been in the hospital and not able to do very much work as yet. I live in the mountain country where there are very few people to see and nothing of very much interest. Please may I have a correspondence with some dear friend, as I enjoy writing or reading very much. I will be anxiously waiting for an answer. Mrs. Ola J. Farmer, Volney, Va.

APPEALS

The following shut-ins have shown a preference for the printed Appeal. Workers who do not have *regular correspondents* will find these Appeals a pleasant part of *Cheerful Letter* work. You may answer all, or any one that particularly interests, but it is not necessary to answer a second time. However, this does not mean that workers with *regular correspondents* cannot answer Appeals. Both may be included, but do not drop *regular correspondents* for Appeals.

1. My husband is dead, writes Mrs. Venie Baker, R. 3, Martinsville, Va., and as I am up in years (53) and my children married with families of their own to support, I get very lonesome. I live in a farming section, and the days are long and sad. Will someone bring a little joy in my life by sending quilt pieces, and any reading that is in large print?

2. Mrs. Maud Walters, R. 1, B. 89, Athens, Tex., writes about much sickness and four deaths inside of a year. A boy of 16 who has been ill and just getting up would be proud of any good book. She mentions "The Scarlet Letter" and "Twice Told Tales." Her home is nine miles from the town.

3. I was once a member of the Exchange, but owing to moving a long distance and bad luck following us, I have failed to keep a regular correspondence.

I have missed the pleasant contacts and I am hopeful of renewing my membership. I have with me seven children, three girls and four boys. I would appreciate old *Cheerful Letter* magazines and any other reading material for the family. Mrs. E. B. Coffey, R. 1, B. 156, Madison Heights, Va.

4. Mrs. C. J. Nolen, R. 2, B. 74, Bassetts, Va., has not written to the Exchange for a long time. Her home is in a farming section and she has three dear children at home. Mrs. Nolen is unable to do any hard work, so sewing materials of any kind would be most acceptable.

5. Mrs. Ola Mae Sliger, R. 2, Riceville, Tenn., is 21 years old and married three years. She lives in a very quiet neighborhood and wants to hear from some dear woman. Mrs. Sliger has not been very well the past few months and her request is any kind of reading or sewing.

6. I am a young woman 23 years old and not in good health. I keep house for my father, husband and two-year-old daughter. I long to get in touch with the outside world, as our neighborhood is so thinly settled. Some stamped pieces and picture postcards would help some. Mrs. Madie Shoemaker, Peakland, Tenn.

7. Here is an appeal from the Virginia Hills. We live on a farm and suffered badly during the recent flood. Many people moved away, but while there is a roof over us we will remain. I am 50 years old and have nine children, ranging in ages from eight to 23. We would like so much to have some good books, as we are all fond of reading. And please remember, the good deed will not stop just with my family. These books will be passed on so someone else may receive the same joy and pleasure. Mrs. William P. Lackey, Timber Ridge, Va.

8. Mrs. Jessie Lavinder, Pleasant View, Va., writes the following:—I am the mother of two children, Junior six and Ralph four. We live in the country and would be glad of some quilt scraps, embroidery thread or something to amuse the children. We hope some kind friend will remember us.

GLEANINGS FROM OUR SUMMER MAIL-BAG

I.

Dear Mrs. Stevens:

Ever since the early winter of 1893 when, through a friend, the *Cheerful Letter* first came into my hands, I have been greatly interested in it and I consider it quite a remarkable fact that this little paper has kept up to the standard set by its originators, through all these years.

It is far more interesting and stimulating than any other of the papers, working for the same general ends, that I have ever seen. I have given me a great deal of pleasure, and I am also thankful for the privilege of having been able, through its means, of bringing some cheer and comfort to others.

One lady, with whom I have corresponded for over forty years, has just died. When we first began to write she was a young mother with three little girls, and I was a bride of only a few months. Before she died she was several times a great-grandmother, and I now have three grandchildren! Though she was not at all well off and led a restricted life, she always made her letters amusing, with interesting items, and she thoroughly enjoyed really worthwhile books.

I am still corresponding with another friend (for certainly thirty years) who writes delightful poetical prose and is always hungry for good literature.

Sincerely yours,

MRS. H. S. FOSTER.

Magnolia, Mass.

II.

My Dear Mrs. Stevens:

Having read Mrs. Blackburn's letter in my June number of the *Cheerful Letter*, and in answer to your request, I am giving my little story.

I have passed my seventy-sixth birthday in June this year. About the latter end of 1894 a dear old lady, Mrs. John Anthony, who passed on just a little later, sent me two copies of the *Cheerful Letter*, which was indeed a "cheerful letter" to

me. I was at that time living in a one-room dugout with my family of seven, on a new claim of 160 acres in northern Ohio, far from relatives and friends. I had three girls and two boys, and my husband.

I sent a letter to Mrs. W. B. Nichols and I think it was soon after the first of 1895 that the *Cheerful Letter* began coming to me, also many letters, books and magazines, so that I started a lending library and was enabled to help many others besides my own family. When we left the farm home, I gave my library to three country schools.

I corresponded with Mrs. William I. Marshall of Chicago from 1896 to 1933, when she passed away, aged eighty-nine years. She lost or rather outlived all of her people, was a real shut-in, and a most wonderful woman. My youngest daughter, who was born in 1897, visited her just the summer before, while attending a convention in Chicago. Mrs. Marshall was so delighted to see her. She sent me a framed motto with such beautiful sentiments I must send you a copy. It is

THE HOUSE OF FRIENDSHIP

Friendship's house is made of gold,

Its doors are open wide,

And love and trust and happiness

Are ever found inside.

It's in the City of the Heart,

Where skies shine all year through,

For Friendship House was built of gold

By precious Friends like you.

It seemed as if she was one of our own and we miss her yet.

My husband and eldest daughter have passed on. The other children have homes and families, so this baby daughter is all that's left me. She has a nice home and a good position and keeps a woman to care for the home and me, as I am a shut-in, not able to care for myself.

I would like so much to hear from Miss Hattie M. Burrell of Brookline, Mass., if still living. She corresponded with me for a number of years and was a very, very lovely friend to me.

Like Mrs. Blackburn, I wish I could express my sincere gratitude, love and appreciation I still feel towards the many

lovely *Cheerful Letter* friends, and I'll never forget dear Mrs. Nichols and others who have passed so much sunshine and happiness to me and mine.

Sincerely,

MRS. B. F. SMITH.

Oklahoma City, Okla.

III.

Dear Mrs. Stevens:

The *Cheerful Letter* magazine was sent to my mother, Mrs. E. C. Anderson, until her death in 1916, from the first publication. And it has been sent to me since 1916, for which I am truly thankful.

As the June *Cheerful Letter* says, "Every place a church, every day the Lord's day." That's the way I look at it and I love the little *Cheerful Letter*.

I will soon be seventy-one years old, and for forty years took care of the sick in my father's family. I am living alone and it is two miles to church and I do not go. I went to the church with my nephew one Saturday evening, and played the piano. It had been two years. With the silent sleepers in the church-yard near, as audience, I played until my nephew came for me.

Please forgive me for writing a letter. I had to talk to someone.

Very sincerely,

ALICE CAREY ANDERSON.

Mocksville, N. C.

IV.

Dear Mrs. Stevens:

I have been a reader of the *Cheerful Letter* for forty-three years. We moved from Tennessee to White County in 1891.

That summer my husband died, leaving me with four children, the baby only four months old. Our preacher, Bro. Gardner, said, "I am going to send your name to the *Cheerful Letter*." So the next year I received the little paper. I have been reading the *Cheerful Letter* for forty-four years. Later there were offers of books which I answered and received some. I am not able to speak the pleasure and comfort I received from the "Letter," and I don't think I ever missed a copy.

I have written to the *Cheerful Letter*,

but nearly lost the use of my arm and could not use a pen and that has held me off. I have been wonderfully blessed with reading, with books and magazines, many little presents, and many, many letters.

I went through an old trunk of keepsakes today and have many of my *Cheerful Letters*. I love to read them. Some of the writers are dead, among them Mrs. C. T. Pierce. She sent me so many books and wrote me such sweet letters.

I have loaned my books and have passed on the *Cheerful Letters*. I do love my books. They were new and I am proud of them.

I hope I will be remembered in the future.

I am a widow and live alone. My children are seventy-five to two or three hundred miles away. I am seventy-seven years old. I make my garden, mow my yard and half of two alleys, piece quilts in cooler weather.

Miss Bartlett wrote that she sent me some quilt pieces, but they never reached me. I would be proud of reading or any pieces. I am lonely and have to work to help make the hours more short.

With love to all to whom love is due, and the Bible says love everybody,

MRS. E. F. LOWE.

Rector, Arkansas.

V.

Dear Mrs. Stevens:

Replying to your request in the *Cheerful Letter*. I am sure it is a little more than forty years since Miss L. Freeman Clarke sent me the first copy of the *Cheerful Letter*, and I do not think I have ever missed a copy since, and now I am eighty.

I remember I was in great trouble at the time. We had come to Virginia three years before. The doctor had just told me at the birth of my little boy that I would never walk again. My baby only lived six months. Since then it has been a fight with poor health and poverty.

My husband was a Civil War soldier, so I get a pension. I am telling you this to let you know what the *Cheerful Letter* has been to me.

Miss L. Freeman Clarke was my friend. For years I distributed her father's sermons.

I loved Miss Clarke. I still have a cape she sent me over the bed, but as you have never been in the homes where the *Cheerful Letter* goes you can have no idea what your work has meant to them. If you could only go in the homes you would understand.

Love to you all,

MRS. EMMA M. BACKUS.

Dade City, Florida.

VI.

Dear Mrs. Stevens:

I was very much interested in Mrs. Blackburn's letter to the *Cheerful Letter*. I have been a reader for forty-six years and have always enjoyed it, and still look forward for time for it to come. Will you please thank the ones who have remembered me with letters and cheer at Christmas time?

Sincerely,

MRS. GEORGE CECIL.

Gooding, Idaho.

VII.

Mrs. Stevens—Dear Friend:

If I could write a book and a very large one at that, it would not hold all that is in my heart, that I would like to say about the dear *Cheerful Letter* and all the friends. I have had the "Letter" from its first number. I remember receiving the first three numbers some forty-five years ago. Sometimes I almost wish that I had kept some of them, but I enjoyed them so much that I wanted to pass them on and still do so.

We lived in Nebraska in a very lonely place when the first numbers came. Even then I was not well and had several small children that kept me closely at home. The good letters, books, magazines and other reading that came to us were a blessing in every way. There were many times when sickness and death came and it did not seem possible to carry on. But encouragement came and comforting words, and life went on, for somewhere the sun was always shining. There were

sunny days. It was always a red-letter day when the post brought me mail from some dear C. L. friend and that was why there were so many red marked days on my calendar.

My children grew up knowing and appreciating the best in interesting and instructive reading. Our lives would have been very narrow and commonplace without. There has always been an uplift that I do not know how to describe, but I wish I could say something worth while about all it has meant to me.

I was seventy-five years old last March. I am very frail now from age and handicaps that have been with me the most of my life. I think I have enjoyed my *Cheerful Letter* friends more than anything else in life besides my children. They have been my good friends, all these years. A number have gone on to that "Isle of Somewhere." My husband and four of my children are in a happier land than this many years now.

Time never drags for me if I can keep busy, though nights are very long. I am always busy except for the times rheumatism makes me helpless.

I hope the *Cheerful Letter* can go on for many years, carrying its cheer and help to countless numbers as it has in the past. I have enjoyed Mrs. Blackburn's good letter so much. I hear sometimes from some of my older pen friends and I am so thankful for them every one, always and now.

"They say that I am growing old,
I've heard them tell it times untold,
In language plain and bold,—
But I'm not growing old.
This frail old shell in which I dwell
Is growing old, I know full well—
But I am not the shell.
"The outward man, do what he can
To lengthen out this life's short span,
Shall perish, and return to dust,
As everything in nature must.
The inward man, the Scriptures say,
Is growing stronger every day;
Then how can I be growing old,
When safe within my Saviour's fold?"

Love and good wishes,

Atlantic, Iowa.

SARAH GILBERT.

We are most grateful for the many expressions of appreciation we have received from those who are among our oldest readers. The letters we are printing in this issue, together with that from Mrs. Blackburn in the June number, come from eight different States, and indicate something of the scope of our *Cheerful Letter* service. Such letters strengthen our purpose and are an inspiration to go forward, with the hope that our little *Cheerful Letter* magazine may continue to carry a message of hope and cheer to all of our readers, with the prayer that we may be given wisdom and love to choose the best for its pages, and with the resolve to hold ever to the high standards set by its beloved founder.—
THE EDITOR.

PORCUPINE FISH

Many persons have never seen a porcupine, must less a porcupine fish, but all know that the interesting and businesslike portion of the "porky" is its quills.

This interesting member of the finny tribe dwells in all seas. Whereas most fish are built like boats with the widest part of their bodies coming in the forward half and gradually tapering to a narrow rear fin, not so the porcupine fish. It doesn't depend on speed to get away from its enemies any more than "porky" does, and when in trouble merely blows itself up like a balloon and sticks out its spines.

If we inspect a school of these fish closely, we find that they average about two feet in length, olive spotted with dark brown. The spines are of the two-forked and three-forked varieties with such broad bases that they form a complete, hard, external skeleton, a real protection. The teeth are all joined and form a continuous beak.

Museums and laboratories interested in fossils exhibit many rock records of these fish having existed in much larger quantities millions of years ago in the Eocene and Miocene periods of geologic history. Fossils are chiefly found in Egypt and Italy.

—Clipped.

WITH OUR BOYS AND GIRLS

JERRY AND HIS DIME

Jerry sat on the back steps in the sunshine. His elbows were braced on his knees and his chin in his hands. He had been sitting that way for a good many minutes, thinking hard. He was so quiet that the brown thrush who was out hunting food for his babies' breakfast came closer and closer.

There were a number of lovely things to be seen that May morning. But, though Jerry's eyes were wide open, he was not seeing either the blue sky, or green grass, or the blossoming trees. He was seeing only the dime, the one shiny dime that was tucked away upstairs in his treasure box. And what he was thinking about was the gift he wanted to take to Miss Harper's party.

Miss Harper was the first grade teacher. The summer vacation was coming, and she was going right across the ocean on a wonderful trip. So someone had said, "Let's have a party for her!" and someone else had said, "Let's have a real go-away party, just as big folks do!" Finally, everyone had said, "Let's!" and so the party was planned. The greatest fun of all was that Miss Harper didn't know she was going to have a party at all. But she was, and there was to be ice cream, and cake, and a gift from everybody.

Jerry could think of ever so many nice things he would like to give Miss Harper. A big box of candy tied with red ribbon, like the one he saw in the shop on his way to school, would be just the very thing. Or a pot of roses that he had seen in the florist's window would be all right—or a book—or a gold bracelet. But Jerry knew very well that it takes more than one shiny dime to buy such things.

"I wish I had another dime!" he thought. "I wish I had about a bushel of dimes!"

Suddenly he straightened up and grinned. "Well," he said right out loud to the sunshine, "I guess I'd better be glad I have one dime. I guess I'd feel

pretty bad if I didn't have even ten cents to spend."

That way of looking at it made Jerry feel so different that he began to laugh, and the brown thrush flew away in a hurry. But he flew only as far as the lilac bush by the garden wall. Perhaps, if he had not stopped there to sing a song, Jerry would never have thought of the nice thing that now popped into his mind. When he heard the lovely songs, his eyes turned in that direction. Of course, the lilac blooms had been there all the time, but Jerry had just not noticed them. Now, all of a sudden, he remembered something he had heard Miss Harper say one day when she pinned a picture up on the schoolroom wall.

"What could be more beautiful than lilacs in bloom?" she had said. "I love them, don't you?"

That had been in the winter when snowflakes were flying outside the window. But Jerry knew that if she loved lilacs then she couldn't help loving them now.

"Lilacs—a bunch of lilacs—the very thing!" said he. "And a vase to put them in!"

"What a splendid idea!" said his mother, when he ran in to tell her. "It pays to take our thinking out into the sunshine, doesn't it?"

The Ten Cent Store was not many blocks away. Jerry was there and back again in a jiffy, holding tight the pretty glass vase he had bought for Miss Harper with his one shiny dime.

Mother helped him cut the lilacs. "Oh, but they are sweet!" she said as she handed them down to him. "Isn't it wonderful to have such lovely flowers to share with our friends?"

Shining with happiness, Jerry carried his gift to the party that afternoon. Wasn't Miss Harper surprised? And wasn't she pleased with everything? And wasn't Jerry pleased when she said to him, "Jerry, Jerry, however did you know that I love lilacs best of all the spring blooms? You couldn't have thought of a

nicer gift if you had turned your thinking cap wrong side out."

There was ice cream and cake, and there were stories about the places she would see across the ocean, and between times when Miss Harper stopped to get a whiff of the lilacs, Jerry said, under his breath, "Thank you, Mr. Thrush, for telling me what to bring."

—*Christian Science Monitor.*

HAPPY BOY

Happy Boy, the pony, wasn't as happy as usual and, instead of resting quietly in his stall in the stable, he moved about nervously, and even the oats in his manger didn't interest him.

"What is the matter with you?" demanded a mare in the next compartment. "Why don't you stand still, or go to sleep, or something?"

"I-er-well, to tell the truth, Mrs. Galloping-Lass," answered Happy Boy, "I can smell a funny smell, and I've got a queer idea at the back of my head that everything isn't quite right."

"Nonsense!" neighed the mare. "Now you be quiet like a good boy."

Happy Boy hesitated and then sniffed the air again. "No!" he cried, "I can't be quiet! I'm going to get outside and discover what's the matter!" And he immediately started to kick the door of his stall down.

"Stop it!" cried several of the other horses. "You'll wake all the stable boys up!"

"That's what I want to do," panted Happy Boy, and he lashed out with his hoofs harder and faster than ever. Biff! Bang! Bong!

In a few minutes the door was battered down, and after a good deal of struggling to get free from his halter, Happy Boy found himself outside, and discovered that the funny smell was even stronger.

Meanwhile Jack, the head stable boy, was fast asleep, dreaming that Happy Boy, his favorite animal, had run away and was galloping down the road.

"Oow!" yelled Jack, as he awoke with a start and sat up in bed. "It isn't a

dream! I can still hear the pounding of hoofs!" And he leaped out of bed and, peering through the window, was amazed to see the pony of his dreams prancing all over the gravel beneath.

"What are—" began Jack, when he happened to turn his head and saw that the harness room was in flames.

"Fire!" he shouted, and throwing a coat over his shoulders, he dashed downstairs.

When the excitement was all over and the fire had been put out, Mrs. Galloping-Lass called for silence in the stable.

"Ladies and gentlemen," she said, "I want you to give three rousing cheers for Happy Boy!"

Needless to say the animals nearly cheered the roof off, but what pleased Happy Boy far more were four rosy-cheeked apples, and knobs of sugar and huge hugs that he received from his young mistress the next morning.

"I'm glad I've got a good sniffer!" he whispered to himself, and everyone connected with the stable was glad, too.

—*Christian Science Monitor.*

THE "WHITTIER BOY" AS A SHOEMAKER

As the district school continued but three months in the year, John Greenleaf Whittier's boyhood privileges for education were very limited, especially as the family library consisted of scarce twenty books and these not suited to the taste of children and youth. The Farmer's Almanacs were carefully studied, and the coming of the weekly Gazette was hailed with joy.

The Whittiers were a very industrious family, and when not attending school, John began at an early age to make himself quite useful to his father in the farm work, improving, as usual, each leisure moment in study. When old enough he was sometimes seen driving the team to Rocks Village with a wagon load of apples (which in those days were very cheap) to exchange for salt fish, which the captains of schooners used to bring up the river in barter with families who wished a winter's supply. At thir-

teen or fourteen he began to write verses, inspired by reading from the Gazette and Free Press, some of the poems of Hannah Gould and Mrs. Hemans, and especially by a volume of Burns given him by his school teacher, Joshua Coffin. A few years later some of his poems were sent (secretly) by his eldest sister, to the Free Press of Newburyport (the family paper) edited by William Lloyd Garrison, who saw in them so much poetic genius that he obtained from the carrier the author's name, visited him at his home, and urged his father to send him to an academy.

To obtain means for so doing, the young man learned to make ladies' slippers, and long ago, a dear old uncle, Deacon John Morse, told us of his interest in the "Whittier Boy," being at the time foreman in the shoe shop from which

he obtained his work. "Upon his first entrance," he said, "I was strongly attracted by his honest, open countenance and manly bearing, and as the employer was somewhat loathe to give out work to beginners, I took special pains to make every suggestion of improvement in my power, and he obtained employment as long as he wished."

In after years, when living in New Hampshire, and asked if he knew the "Poet Whittier," it was with no little pride that he spoke of knowing him not only as a poet, but of his special interest in him when a youthful shoemaker. —From "Gleanings from the Merrimac Valley," by REBECCA I. DAVIS.

The life of one that laboreth and is contented, shall be made sweet.

—*Ecclesiasticus*.

THE CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE

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To cheer and comfort those who are ill, lonely, or discouraged, and to give to those living far from a church some of the inspiration of the printed word by the publication of one good sermon, or similar article in each issue of the *Cheerful Letter Magazine*. Only such simple religious truths and principles as are agreed upon by all churches are printed.

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To establish Circulating Libraries in isolated communities, schools, and colleges in rural and mountain districts where public libraries and other educational privileges are not available.

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